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November 13, 1981

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S20000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(X) Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as __ () Extend as __ () Downgrade to __
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason ____

A. M. Rosenthal
Executive Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43d Street
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Mr. Rosenthal:

The New York Times has taken an interest in my wife's case in the past, and there has been a recent change in her status, as explained below. I would appreciate your considering it for publication as a "letter to the Editor".

Graciela Esther Arabaolasa, an Argentine political prisoner, was released from prison on October 20, 1981. She is now living with our three little children in her parent's home in Villa Maria, Argentina, after spending four and a half years in prison.

She remains a PEN detainee, "free" on a conditional basis ("libertad vigilada" or freedom under surveillance), a status often referred to as "parole". This term is very misleading: it suggests a public trial, a sentence, an early release, a publicly known date of termination of the sentence; and it is nothing of the sort. In my wife's case, she was sentenced by the judiciary to four years' imprisonment (see 'The New York Times' "Cornell Asks US To Help Free Argentine Woman", June 30, 1980, p.4) and completed her sentence on April 26, 1981.

In practice, her PEN arrest amounts to yet another sentence, to be served this time under more benign conditions, but a sentence nevertheless, served under no charges, which continues to prevent her from leaving Argentina, thus maintaining indefinitely the split of our family.

I want to thank 'The New York Times' for its part in bringing about Graciela's release from prison. This change is without doubt an improvement, although unfortunately, given the continued restriction of her freedom, it falls short of the ultimate solution for which we all yearn: that we be able to resume our lives together here as a family.

With many thanks for your time and help, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Juan M. Alonso

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